

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CARACA 04909 172035Z
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 NSCE-00
/031 W

-----180646Z 046741 /23S

R 171830Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7677

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 4909

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
SUBJECT: MRS. CARTER'S VISIT; BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

REF: STATE 104923

1. FOLLOWING ARE BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES REQUESTED IN REFTEL ON
PRESIDEN CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND FORMER PRESIDENT ROMULO
BETANCOURT:

2. PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ IS A LIFELONG POLITICIAN WHO HAS
SERVED OVER THE YEARS AS DEPUTY, MINISTER AND SECRETARY GENERAL
OF HIS POLITICAL PARTY. NOW 54, PEREZ KNOWS HIS COUNTRY AND PEOPLE
WELL. HIS DOMESTIC PROGRAM AIMS TOWARD BETTERING THE LOT OF VENEZUELA'S

POOR AND UNDERPRIVILEGED THROUGH A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF
NATIONAL WEALTH. PEREZ FEARS THAT IF THIS IS NOT DONE, THEN DEMOCRACY
IS FINISHED IN VENEZUELA, AND A DICTATORSHIP OF THE RIGHT OR LEFT
IS INEVITABLE. FOR PEREZ, PETROLEUM IS THE GREATEST PEACEFUL BARGAIN-
ING WEAPON (HE CAREFULLY CALLS IT AN "INSTRUMENT") IN HISTORY. HE IS
DETERMINED TO USE IT TO THE HILT-ITS REVENUES TO TRANSFORM VENEZUELA
INTERNALLY, ITS POWER TO GIVE VENEZUELA PRIDE OF PLACE IN THE
COMMUNITY OF NATIONS, THE GLORY FROM BOTH TO ENSURE PEREZ IS NOT
INCONSIDERABLE PLACE IN HISTORY.

3. PEREZ' FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES AND HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 04909 172035Z

THE THIRD WORLD FLOW FROM HIS POLITICAL REALISM AND VAULTING
PERSONAL AMBITION. PEREZ IS KEENLY AWARE OF THE CONSTRAINTS
WHICH VENEZUELA'S SIZE AND POPULATION PLACE UPON HIS COUNTRY'S
IMPACT ABROAD, AND IS ATTEMPTING TO BROADEN HIS AND VENEZUELA'S
INFLUENCE THROUGH SPEARHEADING AN EXTRAORDINARY DRIVE TO INTEGRATE
LATIN AMERICA AND BUILD THIRD WORLD SOLIDARITY. PEREZ IS EXPERT
IN PLAYING UPON LATIN AMERICA AND THIRD WORLD FRUSTRATIONS

TOWARDS THE "GREAT POWERS", AS EVIDENCED BY HIS MANIPULATION OF LATIN AMERICAN RESENTMENT AGAINST THE US TRADE ACT, HIS EFFORTS IN BEHALF OF THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA), HIS VOCAL SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S CANAL ASPIRATIONS, AND HIS PRESSURING OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ON BEHALF OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AT THE CIEC TALKS. HE ALSO PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN MAINTAINING OPEC UNITY, VIZ. HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HAS ADROITLY NEUTRALIZED THE OIL PRICE ISSUE IN LATIN AMERICA AND DISSIPATED MUCH OF THE ANIMUS AGAINST VENEZUELA AS A RICH COUNTRY BY OFFERING ECONOMIC HELP TO ITS POORER NEIGHBORS.

4. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT PEREZ, BUOYED UP BY VENEZUELA'S OIL BONANZA AND STRONG DOMESTIC POLITICAL SUPPORT, INCREASINGLY FEELS HE HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY DESTINY TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF VENEZUELA'S GREAT (AND ONLY) NATIONAL HERO, SIMON BOLIVAR. IT IS WITH THIS BOLIVARIAN SENSE OF DESTINY THAT PEREZ BELIEVES HE HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD VENEZUELA OUT OF AN UNWORTHY PAST AS A POOR AND EXPLOITED BACKWATER INTO A BRILLIANT FUTURE AS A PROSPEROUS AND POWERFUL HEMISPHERE LEADER AND SPOKESMAN FOR THE THIRD WORLD.

5. PEREZ' CAMPAIGN SLOGAN OF "DEMOCRACY WITH ENERGY" MARKS HIS LIFESTYLE. HE IS UP AT DAWN FOR AN HOUR'S EXERCISE IN THE GYM BEFORE PLUNGING INTO A CROWDED OFFICIAL SCHEDULE WHICH OFTEN ENDS LATE AT NIGHT AND LEAVES HIS COLLEAGUES LIMP. DURING HIS TRIPS ABROAD HIS PACE AND ABILITY TO GO WITHOUT MUCH SLEEP WEARS OUT HIS HOSTS AND COMPANIONS ALIKE.

6. PEREZ IS AN ERECT, TOUGH AND VIRILE MAN WHOSE RATHER UGLY FACE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 04909 172035Z

IS FRAMED WITH SIDEBURNS BOLIVAR WOULD ENVY. AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKER, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION PEREZ' MANNER CAN RUN CALCULATED SCALES FROM GENIALITY TO FORMIDABILITY. ALTHOUGH HE KNEW RELATIVELY LITTLE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRIOR TO ASSUMING OFFICE, HE DISPLAYED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER DURING THE LATTER'S VISIT IN FEBRUARY 1976. EGOCENTRIC, PEREZ IS FORTHRIGHT, EVEN AGGRESSIVE, IN PRESENTING VENEZUELA'S CASE. AN OPEN ADMIRER OF PRESIDENT CARTER, PEREZ WAS DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER REFUTING THE NEW YORK TIMES' CHARGES IN FEBRUARY THAT PEREZ HAD ACCEPTED FUNDS FROM THE CIA WHILE INTERIOR MINISTER IN THE EARLY 1960'S. THE LETTER GOT HIM OFF THE HOOK HERE IN VENEZUELA, A HOOK ON WHICH HE HAD UNNECESSARILY PLACED HIMSELF. THE SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CIA ISSUE HAS GONE A LONG WAY IN CREATING A VERY PROPITIOUS CLIMATE FOR MRS. CARTER'S VISIT HERE.

7. BASICALLY, PEREZ IS A FRIENDLY MAN WHO ENJOYS MEETING PEOPLE. HIS DIRECT AND FRANK STYLE MAY BE INHIBITED TO SOME EXTENT BY NOT BEING ABLE TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH MRS. CARTER IN ENGLISH.

PEREZ HAS ENORMOUS EXPECTATIONS OF A VASTLY INCREASED BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES ARISING OUT OF HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND SOME OF THIS WILL BE MANIFESTED DURING MRS. CARTER'S STAY IN VENEZUELA. WITH MRS. CARTER HE WILL DOUBTLESS EXERT HIMSELF TO CHARM AND IMPRESS, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF HIS VISIT TO THE US LATER IN THE MONTH.

8. ROLULO BETANCOURT. THE GUIDING SPIRIT OF VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY, ROMULO BETANCOURT WAS THE FIRST DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT TO COMPLETE HIS TERM OF OFFICE. TODAY, MORE THAN 13 YEARS AFTER THE END OF HIS PRESIDENCY, BETANCOURT IS STILL THE MOST FAMOUS LIVING VENEZUELAN. NOW SOMETHING OF A FATHER FIGURE AND ELDER STATESMAN, DON ROMULO--AS HE IS AFFECTIONATELY CALLED--IS HIGHLY RESPECTED BY ALL POLITICAL GROUPS AND THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE. BETANCOURT WAS FORCEFUL, EFFICIENT, DECISIVE AND CONFIDENT AS PRESIDENT AND HE REMAINS SO. HE IS WELL-INFORMED, INTELLIGENT AND RELAXED, AS WELL AS A GOOD BUT BITINGLY SARCASTIC CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 04909 172035Z

POLITICAL DEBATER. THOROUGHLY HONEST, BETANCOURT'S HOME IN CARACAS' ALTAMIRA SECTION WAS GIVEN TO HIM BY FRIENDS BECAUSE HE DID NOT OWN ONE WHEN HE LEFT THE PRESIDENCY.

9. BORN IN 1908 NEAR CARACAS, BETANCOURT WAS A STUDENT ACTIVIST IN HIS YOUTH AND A MEMBER OF THE "GENERATION OF '28", SO-CALLED BECAUSE OF THE STUDENT REVOLT AGAINST THE GOMEZ REGIME IN 1928. FORCED INTO EXILE, BETANCOURT EVENTUALLY RETURNED TO VENEZUELA AND FOUNDED THE GOVERNING ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD) PARTY IN 1941. HE AND A GROUP OF YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS ENGINEERED THE 1945 COUP WHICH FIRST BROUGHT AD, AND BETANCOURT, TO POWER. AFTER THE 1948 ELECTIONS AND THE SUBSEQUENT MILITARY COUP, BETANCOURT AGAIN FOUND HIMSELF IN EXILE. FOR 10 YEARS HE DIRECTED UNDERGROUND ACTIVITIES FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, UNTIL 1958 WHEN, WITH THE OVERTHROW OF THE PEREZ JIMENEZ REGIME, BETANCOURT WAS HIMSELF ELECTED PRESIDENT.

10 BETANCOURT SERVED FROM 1959 TO 1964, SURVIVING ATTEMPTS AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT--AND EVEN HIS LIFE--BY BOTH THE REACTIONARY RIGHT AND THE COMMUNIST LEFT, WHILE PUSHING FORWARD PROGRAMS OF VITAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM. OVERCOMING THESE THREATS TO HIS GOVERNMENT, GROWING PUBLIC FAITH IN VENEZUELA'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT MADE POSSIBLE THE COMPLETION OF BETANCOURT'S TERM OF OFFICE AND THE COUNTRY'S FIRST PEACEFUL TRANSITION OF GOVERNMENT. HAVING HANDED OVER THE REINS TO HIS SUCCESSOR, RAUL LEONI, DON ROMULO WENT INTO VOLUNTARY EXILE IN EUROPE WHERE HE LIVED FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

11. BETANCOURT SETTLED IN BERN, SWITZERLAND, WHERE HE WORKED ON HIS MEMOIRS. THERE HE MARRIED HIS LONG-TIME COMPANION, DR. RENEE HARTMANN, IN 1967, AFTER OBTAINING A DIVORCE FROM HIS FIRST WIFE. BETANCOURT HAS A DAUGHTER BY HIS FIRST MARRIAGE, VIRGINIA, WHO IS

DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY. HIS ENGLISH IS ADEQUATE,
BUT HE PREFERS SPANISH FOR SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION.

12. AN ADMIRER OF THE UNITED STATES, BETANCOURT WROTE ON THE
OCCASION OF THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL, "WHEN FACED WITH ADVERSE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 CARACA 04909 172035Z

CONDITIONS, IN MY POLITICAL AVATAR, I HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE
UNITED STATES. I HAVE ALWAYS RECEIVED THE WELCOME HOSPITALITY
OF YOUR UNAFFECTED AND GENEROUS PEOPLE; YOUR COUNTRY IS ONE OF
THOSE THAT HAS WON MY HEART AND MY AFFECTION". BETANCOURT WAS
IN THE UNITED STATES LAST YEAR AT THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION AND IS NOW AT WORK ON A BOOK ENTITLED JIMMY CARTER:
MAN AND PRESIDENT, TO BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY. IN IT BETANCOURT GIVES
HIS IMPRESSIONS OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND NOTES THAT THE PRESIDENT
ECHOES HIS OWN DEEPLY-FELT CONCERNS FOR ADMINISTRATIVELY MORALITY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CARACA04909
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770176-0502
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770550/aaaabraj.tel
Line Count: 192
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cf34be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 104923
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2495922
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRS. CARTER'S VISIT: BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES
TAGS: OVIP, (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cf34be92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009